

spending Christmas with family or at home alone—are there other options that you could consider? It is so easy to get stuck in our strategies if we don't acknowledge the actual needs we want to meet. Once we acknowledge them, we become more open to looking at other options.

Notice today how conflicts stem from arguing a particular strategy instead of focusing on discovering and meeting everyone's needs.



## OCTOBER 13

*Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got.*

—Janis Joplin

### ***Meeting Our Need for Respect***

“You know I respect you. What's your problem?” Do you ever find yourself in an argument over whether someone respects you? This argument can be frustrating if you focus on whether the other person respects you. The real question is *whether your need for respect is being met*.

A friend of mine had a tendency to say “What a girl” to his male friends when they did things that he thought were beneath their ability, such as when they dropped the ball in a softball game. Every time I heard this, I felt annoyed because my need for respect wasn't met. When I tried to speak with him about it, he would often say: “Oh, Mary, you know I respect you. I'm not saying *you're* a girl. Only that Bob is acting like one.” Then we would argue about

whether he respected me or not. Neither of us was satisfied in these conversations. Then one time I said to him: “You know, every time I hear you call your friends ‘girls’ when you are disappointed with their behavior, I feel offended, because I value respect for all people. Would you be willing to use other means of expressing your frustration while I’m around?” He started telling me, once again, that he respected me. I responded by saying: “I hear that you feel respect for me, but when I hear you say ‘What a girl,’ *my need for respect as a female* is not met. So, would you be willing to choose a different way to express your disappointment to your teammates while I am present?” Once I could be clear, he agreed.

It is a waste of time to argue about whether we are respected. It is clearer and more effective to state that *our need for respect is not being met* by a particular behavior, and what we want that would satisfy our need. When we clarify this, we avoid arguments over who respects whom. I am not interested in labeling the other person as disrespectful. My goal is for the other person to exhibit a different way of showing their respect for me. Making a specific request, in this case, asking my friend to express his disappointment differently while I am present, keeps the focus on what I want.

Be aware today of times when your need  
for respect is not met. Then express your feelings  
and needs to the other person.

